

Southern Nevada District Manager's Report
Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council
Tim Smith, District Manager
March 13, 2014

National BLM/DOI Updates:

Secretary Jewell Announces Two Solar Projects Approved in California, Nevada

Projects mark the 49th and 50th utility-scale renewable energy projects approved on public lands since 2009

As part of President Obama's Climate Action Plan to reduce carbon pollution, create jobs and move our economy toward clean energy sources, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell today announced the approval of two solar energy projects located near the Nevada-California border that are expected to supply 550 megawatts of renewable energy, enough to power about 170,000 homes, and support more than 700 jobs through construction and operations.

Today's approvals bring to 50 the number of utility-scale renewable energy proposals and associated transmission that the Interior Department has approved since 2009, including 27 solar, 11 wind, and 12 geothermal projects. Together, the projects could support more than 20,000 construction and operations jobs and, when built, generate nearly 14,000 megawatts of electricity, or enough to power 4.8 million homes. Thirteen of the projects are already in operation, including the Ivanpah Solar Electric Generating System, a 377-megawatt solar thermal plant that started commercial operations and delivering power to California's electric grid last week.

The first project is the 300-megawatt Stateline Solar Farm Project, a facility that will be built in San Bernardino County, California, on approximately 1,685 acres of public land located two miles south of the California-Nevada border. Using photovoltaic panels, the facility will generate enough electricity to power approximately 90,000 homes and create an estimated 400 jobs during construction and 12 permanent jobs during operations. The facility will connect to the grid via a 2.7-mile 220-kilovolt transmission line.

The second project is the 250-megawatt Silver State South Solar Project located near Primm, Nevada on approximately 2,400 acres of public land. The facility is expected to power approximately 80,000 homes and will be located adjacent to the 50-megawatt Silver State North Project, the first solar plant on public lands to deliver power to the grid. Silver State South will also use photovoltaic panels and will generate an estimated 300 jobs during construction and 15 permanent operations jobs.

Both projects are proposed by the company First Solar and have commitments from Southern California Edison to purchase the projects' output for 20 years.

First Solar has agreed to undertake significant project design changes and mitigation measures to minimize impacts to wildlife, water, historical, cultural and other resources. For example, the BLM worked on the Stateline proposal to reduce the project's footprint by more than 20 percent to avoid and minimize project impacts. In addition, as part of ongoing efforts to protect the

threatened Desert Tortoise, the BLM is expanding the nearby Ivanpah Desert Wildlife Management Area by more than 20,000 acres and requiring that the developer protect three times the area that the project will disturb.

For the Silver State South project, the project design was modified to reduce the size of the facility by 100 megawatts. Mitigation measures include soil stabilization to prevent erosion and polluted runoff. In addition, the developer must fund over \$3.6 million for Desert Tortoise mitigation and \$3.5 million for studies intended to guide future efforts to protect the Desert Tortoise in the project area. The company must also assess the project's potential adverse impact if archaeological properties at the site are found to be eligible for National Register of Historic Places listing.

Southern Nevada District Office (SNDO) Updates:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Nevada is extending the deadline for nominations for open positions on its three Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) until March 26. The formal call for nominations published in the Federal Register on February 10.

Resource Advisory Councils are citizen-based groups that make recommendations to the BLM regarding public land and resource management, including land-use planning, recreation, fire management, livestock grazing, and wild horse and burro herd management. Each RAC consists of 10 to 15 members with an interest in public land management. Members are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to serve an initial three-year term and may be reappointed to serve additional three-year terms. The diverse membership of each RAC is aimed at achieving a balanced outlook that the BLM needs for its mission, which is to manage the public lands for multiple uses.

Each of the RACs has different positions open in the following categories and interested persons can apply for any position:

Category One – Public land ranchers and representatives of organizations associated with energy and mineral development, the timber industry, transportation or rights-of-way, off-highway vehicle use, and commercial recreation.

Category Two – Representatives of nationally or regionally recognized environmental organizations, archaeological and historical organizations, dispersed recreation activities, and wild horse and burro organizations.

Category Three – Representatives of state, county, or local elected office; representatives and employees of a state agency responsible for the management of natural resources; representatives of Indian Tribes within or adjacent to the area for which the RAC is organized; representatives and employees of academic institutions who are involved in natural sciences; and the public-at-large.

Individuals may nominate themselves or others to serve on an advisory council. Nominations should be made on the appropriate nomination form, which is available at any BLM office, or on the internet at on.doi.gov/14tvwdE. Nominees must be a resident of Nevada. Nominees will be considered on the basis of their training, education, and knowledge of the council's geographical

area. Nominees should also demonstrate a commitment to consensus building and collaborative resource decision-making. All nominations must include letters of reference from the represented interests or organizations; a completed nomination form; and any other information that addresses the nominee's qualifications. All nominations will be given full consideration.

The council meets several times a year and provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, through the BLM district managers and the state director, on management of the public lands within the council's geographic area. It is the practice in Nevada to hold one joint meeting of all three Nevada RACs every year.

Completed nominations for the Mojave-Southern Great Basin RAC positions should be mailed to:

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Field Office Updates:

Las Vegas Field Office:

Las Vegas Field Office Updates Legislative Committee on RMP: The Las Vegas Field Manager provided an update on the Las Vegas/Pahrump RMP Revision to the Legislative Committee on Public Lands. Topics discussed were the updated timeline for releasing the draft document for public review, issues covered in the RMP Revision, and cooperating agency coordination and participation. This committee is represented by members from all counties in Nevada. The Las Vegas Field Manager also presented at the State Land Use Planning Advisory Council meeting. The presentation focused on ways to improve working relationships between BLM and local governments relative to land use planning.

Red Rock/Sloan Field Office:

Red Rock Hosts Open House on Infrastructure Improvements: The Red Rock/Sloan Field Office hosted an open house at the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (Red Rock) Visitor Center classroom. The informational meeting provided an overview of the proposed 13-Mile Scenic Drive and other infrastructure improvement projects at Red Rock.

Proposed projects include repaving the 13-Mile Scenic Drive and associated public safety design improvements, restoring and expanding parking areas and installing a new low water crossing near Sandstone Quarry. Additional projects include a proposed power grid connection to the Red Rock Fire Station and campground and a new water distribution system for the campground.

The open house is part of a series, held each month, to give the public an opportunity to meet BLM staff, get information about projects and planning, and ask questions about the management of Red Rock and Sloan Canyon National Conservation Areas and Walking Box Ranch.

Wild Horse and Burro Educational Program at Red Rock: The Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association (RRCIA) and the BLM sponsored another "Jackson and Carson Day" at Red Rock.

Jackson -- the burro -- adopted by Blaine Benedict, Executive Director of RRCIA and Carson Blue -- the horse -- adopted by Back Country Horseman Keith Wheeler have been groomed by the SNDO, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist and the Back Country Horseman to help educate the public about the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program.

Jackson and Carson appearances are now a popular event and both are now booked throughout the year at on the third Saturday of the month.

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